

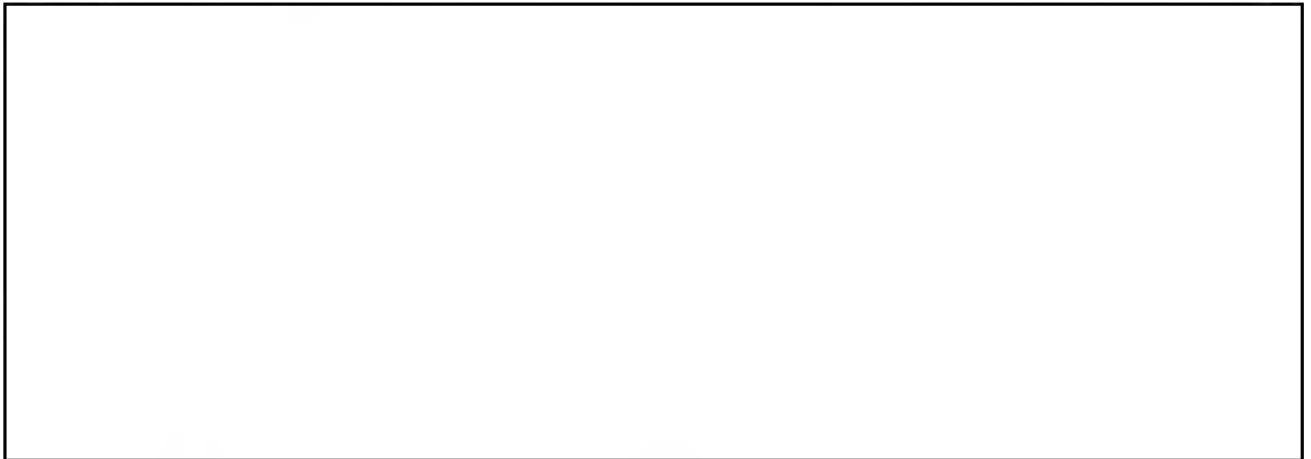
NSC BRIEFING

28 October 1959

IRAQ

- I. Anti-Qasim plotting by several groups continues, and situation remains explosive.

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- II. Both UAR and Iraqi army authorities are clearly apprehensive;

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- A. Cairo fears that Israel, which has long felt the West should support Qasim, might move militarily to prevent or counter any UAR intervention in Iraq.

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- B. Iraq fears possible UAR movements from Syria.

1.

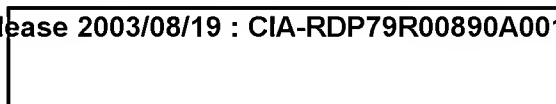


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[REDACTED] Nasir regards military intervention in Iraq as a dangerous step to be taken only in extremis.

- III. Meanwhile, the Iraqi Communists are striving to exploit the advantage they have derived from the Qasim assassination attempt and from the evidence pointing to the participation of an anti-Communist group in the attack.

State Dept. review completed. Referral to NSC not required.



[REDACTED]

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- A. Col. Mahdawi, notorious head of the "peoples court" who rushed home from Communist China immediately after Qasim was attacked, is playing a more prominent role; he claims he will preside over a new set of trials.
- B. Other pro-Communists, such as Qasim's "aide" Col. Wasfi Tahir, have also been noted more active of late than they have been for some time.

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- [REDACTED]
- D. The Communists again have obtained control of Baghdad radio's programming and "news" comment, and are pressing for revival of the Popular Resistance Force as the only group really capable of "protecting" Qasim.

IV. A key question in this situation is the state of Qasim's health.

- A. Qasim has already stayed in the hospital considerably longer than the public was first told he would.
 - 1. Rumors are flying that his wounds are infected, that he has "turned green," that he is feverish, etc.
 - 2. But he continues to receive deputations, appears on television, and apparently conducts a certain amount of business from his bed.
- B. The US embassy in Baghdad doubts there is anything seriously amiss despite Qasim's prolonged stay in the hospital.

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- A. UAR. Nasir has moved to strengthen Syrian flank by appointing Amir as effective viceroy there.
1. Sarraj also has had powers enlarged, but may be eased out eventually.
 2. Syrian discontent likely remain chronic until economic situation improves.
- B. TAPLINE. The UAR has apparently postponed issuing the decree originally scheduled for the end of October, designed to increase sharply the transit fees from TAPLINE.
1. Nasir may be reluctant to disturb his relations with the West at this time because of the critical situation in Iraq.

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